

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**USDA Opens Additional Land for Emergency Haying**

*Four Kansas counties declared federal disaster areas*

**Topeka** – Kansas Governor Sam Brownback expressed his administration's appreciation today for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) approval of haying on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres designated as "CP25," which have been ineligible for emergency haying in the past.

Governor Brownback, Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Dale Rodman and Kansas Water Office Director Tracy Streeter have worked closely with U.S. Senator Pat Roberts for more than a year urging USDA to approve haying on CP25 acres. There are more than 726,000 acres of CP25 land in Kansas, and according to CRP regulations, farmers and ranchers are allowed to hay half of the CP25 acres.

"As this drought continues to strengthen in intensity, it is imperative that our livestock producers have access to all possible water and forage to care for their animals. I thank USDA for recognizing the dire situations we're facing in Kansas and for providing immediate relief to struggling farmers and ranchers," Gov. Brownback said. "It's reassuring to see the cooperation shown among Kansans to provide resources, information and assistance to help farmers and ranchers cope with the drought. I especially appreciate the leadership shown by Sen. Roberts in his efforts to help open these additional CRP acres for haying."

In addition to approving emergency grazing on CP25 acres, USDA also declared additional Kansas counties as federal disaster areas. Atchison, Brown, Doniphan and Jackson counties were declared as primary disaster areas. Jefferson, Leavenworth, Nemaha, Pottawatomie and Shawnee were named contiguous disaster counties. Agricultural producers in these counties will be eligible for federal disaster assistance programs.

"We continue working with our partners in Kansas to assure farmers and ranchers have the resources they need to respond to the drought today but also to recover from it going forward," said Secretary Rodman. "Haying on CP25 acres will provide access to additional forage and will provide immediate relief to livestock producers. We will continue exploring all avenues to provide relief from this drought to Kansas farmers and ranchers."

Earlier this week, Governor Brownback sent a letter requesting U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack help push forward a limited irrigated crop insurance option to help Kansas agricultural producers. Implementing the plan that has been developed for limited irrigation crop insurance will allow producers to better manage their risk as they look for ways to conserve the Ogallala Aquifer.

"We greatly appreciate all of USDA's efforts to respond to this drought and we are hopeful Secretary Vilsack will work with Kansans to provide this additional option for farmers and ranchers," said Director Tracy Streeter.

Farmers and ranchers are encouraged to contact their local USDA Farm Service Agency office for immediate assistance.

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